**CALL FOR JOURNALISTS FOR PRODUCTION OF INVESTIGATIONS**

*Issued: February 28, 2025*

*Application Deadline: (ongoing, first deadline June 30th, 2025)*

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) invites journalists covering EU member countries and EU aspiring countries[[1]](#footnote-1) to apply for support in producing in-depth investigative stories shedding light on critical social, political and economic issues. Selected journalists will receive financial and editorial support to develop impactful stories that foster accountability and public awareness.

**BACKGROUND**

BIRN is a network of non-profit organisations dedicated to fostering independent journalism, strengthening media freedom and supporting investigative reporting across Southern and Eastern Europe. Through its extensive experience in training, mentoring and editorial collaboration, BIRN empowers journalists to produce high-quality stories that drive accountability and public awareness.

As part of these efforts, BIRN is a key partner in the [Media Organisations for Stronger Transnational Journalism (MOST)](https://birn.eu.com/programmes/media-organisations-for-stronger-transnational-journalism-most/) initiative, which aims to enhance the resilience of non-profit media in reporting on European issues and drive innovation in foreign reporting.

The initiative supports media organisations in developing new approaches and strengthening capacity, fostering collaboration and sharing best practices across borders.

MOST brings together seven prominent media organisations to establish a community of practice focused on business transformation and editorial cooperation. The project is implemented by a consortium comprising: 1)[Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)](https://birn.eu.com/), 2) [Centro per la Cooperazione Internazionale (CCI/OBCT)](https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng); 3) [El Orden Mundial – EOM, Spain](https://elordenmundial.com/); 4) [European Pravda, Ukraine](https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/eng/); 5) [New Eastern Europe](http://www.neweasterneurope.eu); 6) [Le Courrier des Balkans – Courriers D’Europe et D’Orient – DcB, France](https://www.courrierdesbalkans.fr/); and 7) [Stichting the Tactical Technology Collective – TTC, Netherlands](https://tacticaltech.org/).

Within MOST, BIRN’s role focuses on content production and editorial collaboration, by facilitating the exchange of materials, fostering cross-border reporting and providing sub-grants to support investigative journalism. These efforts build on BIRN’s proven track record of capacity-building initiatives across the Southern and Eastern European regions, equipping journalists with the tools, skills and editorial guidance necessary for impactful reporting.

As part of this initiative, **BIRN invites individual journalists** to apply for support in producing investigative stories that bring awareness to underreported topics in their countries. This call seeks to empower journalists to uncover pressing social, political, and economic issues and contribute to informed public discourse.

**WHO CAN APPLY?**

Journalists meeting the following criteria are eligible to apply:

* Currently working in or publishing stories covering **EU member countries and EU aspiring countries[[2]](#footnote-2)**;
* Demonstrated interest in **investigating topics** related to critical social, political and economic issues in the above countries;
* A minimum of **two (2) years of experience** in content production, investigative journalism, or a similar role within the media sector.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

All received applications will go through the following two stages:

1. **Administrative and eligibility check by BIRN** to verify that the applicants have adhered to the application procedure outlined in the [Application Form](https://be.ecrtool.org/admin/webform/manage/call_for_add_info/share/preview), meet the eligibility criteria, and have submitted all required documents by the deadline. Applicants will be notified of the outcome via email and may request clarifications if needed. Applications that successfully pass this stage will be forwarded to the jury for grant consideration.
2. **Evaluation by the jury**, which will consist of experienced media professionals from the partner organisations within the MOST consortium. Jury members will assess the applications based on the following criteria.

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| --- | --- |
| **CRITERIA** | **MAXIMUM SCORE** |
| **1.** **POTENTIAL OF THE PROPOSED STORY*** It tackles critical social, political, or economic issues.
* It has investigative and in-depth potential.
* It contains specific cross-cutting issues, such as the promotion of gender equality, respect for human rights and marginalised groups.
 | 25 points |
| **2.** **CAPACITY** * Applicant demonstrates significant experience in producing investigative stories.
* Applicant demonstrates previous experience related to the topic of the proposed story.
 | 25 points |
| **MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE** | **50 points** |

Successful applicants will be notified by email and may request clarifications. Upon positive notification at this stage, successful applicants will sign the contract with BIRN and become recipients of the grant.

**FUNDS AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE**

Each journalist selected to work on their story will receive a gross amount of €1,140 for the production of their investigative stories. Under this scheme, BIRN will be able to give 20 grants in total. Each grant must be implemented within three to six months. The call for applications will be closed once all 20 grants available are distributed.

The selected journalists will also be supplied with mentoring support provided by BIRN editors/mentors, to help them produce their investigative stories.

# WHEN TO APPLY?

The deadline for the first round of applications will be open until June 30.

Applications will be reviewed according to the following schedule:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **APPLICATION TIMEFRAME** | **DECISION TIMEFRAME** |
| March 2025 – June 2025  | July 2025 |
| July 2025 – October 2025 | November 2025 |
| November 2025 – February 2026 | March 2026 |

**HOW TO APPLY?**

Please fill in the [Application form](https://be.ecrtool.org/admin/webform/manage/call_for_add_info/share/preview) in the English language. Applicants need to attach two documents to the application form: a CV in English language and a signed letter of support in English language from the media outlet where they will publish the story. Please note that recipients of the grants will publish their stories under a license which allows MOST partners to republish the content for free.

If you have questions about the programme and the Call, please contact Ivana Drakic Brkan, Project Manager at ivana.drakic.brkan@birnnetwork.org .

1. [Ten aspiring countries](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/eu-enlargement_en) are involved in the accession process: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Kosovo. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)